

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace page 4 line 1 to page 7 line 18 of the specification with the following:

At Ebay.Com (Figure 1, July 15, 1999), the largest Internet auction site, millions of objects are “auctioned” at any given time. Search for goods is accomplished through browsing the extensive category trees/paths (~~Figures Figure 1A, and 1B~~), or entering item type or name through a “search” function. The auction item list obtained through category browsing ~~are~~ is astoundingly large, ~~[[in]]~~ on the order of hundreds to thousands of items, over many tens of web-pages (each can be more than one physically printed page), listed with an abbreviated one-line entry or a thumbnail entry for each item. ~~Figure Figures 1C1 and 1C2 are 2 pages of a list of through Figure 1C6 list~~ “Featured” furniture auction items, and Figure ~~[[1C7]]~~ 1C3 is the 1st page of 37 pages of 1761 furniture items ~~currently~~ being auctioned on the Ebay.Com site on July 15, 1999. Note that the right most column indicates the “ending time” of the auctions, mostly ending around July 22 through July 25, a ten day auction time span, impossible to accommodate in conventional “live” auctions, which measure auction time for each item in minutes. Choosing items out of such a large list can only be accomplished by reading through tens or hundreds of one-line abbreviated descriptions of each item, and choosing one item from the list to view the more detailed information about the item, one-at-a-time. Once an item is thus chosen, the browser/buyer clicks on the line or thumbnail entry of the item on the list (see Figure 1C2, 5th item 122 on the page), and ~~wait~~ waits for its descriptions to be sent to the screen from the remote site server (Figures 1D1 through 1D 3.) If the buyer wishes to view more items from the list of hundreds of items, it can only be done, again, one-at-a-time, by clicking “back” to the list, and choose another item, click on the item, wait for page download, thus repeating. When the buyer is viewing information about one interested item, the information for other items previously viewed are gone from the screen The buyer must print all information of every item, before clicking “back” to the list to access information of another item. The comparison between similar or interested items can only be reasonably done by reading the volume of printout pages of these items. At the mean time, the auction status and current high-bid of some items may have already changed. Although such process is tedious and time consuming, for many people, it is still preferred over making the effort required to attend a conventional physical “live” auction.

Bidding is entered electronically on a bidding screen that usually follows the bidding information, object description, and photograph(s) of the object. For a single item auction, the bid entered at any given time must “beat” the current highest bid to be relevant and logged into bidding history as the updated highest bid. For a “Dutch Auction;” where multiple numbers of an identical item are auctioned, the bid must be higher than the current lowest valid bid. Every “current highest bid” is there to be outbid before the “auction time” is still open. It is highly desirable to a serious buyer to monitor the bidding status, and bid only when “closing” time comes near.

With the current state of the art in online auction, such monitoring is accomplished through manually logging onto the site at any particular time, go to the pages where a particular item of interest is described, look up the bidding status of that particular item, and the closing time of this particular auction. Set an alarm clock for certain intervals before its “closing time,” for final check, which could be days later. At any moment between the time you last manually checked the auction status, and the time of the alarm, the auction status can only be updated by manually and periodically logging on to the site, [[go]] and going to the particular pages describing the item, one item at a time. If the buyer is interested in a number of items, the process is extremely tedious, time consuming, and unreliable. One can enter a bid, request email notification from the site when the bid is “outbid” by another buyer. However, this is a one-time only notification. To be notified again, one must enter another bid that beats the current highest bid, and risking buying the object at that price, or to be outbid again.

For a physical live auction event, there is no way to monitor the event other than being physically present.

FIGS. 2A-2E, 2F1-2F2, 2G1-2G2 Figures 2A-2B are screen prints of Auction.Yahoo.Com, and FIGS. 3A, 3B1-3B3 and 3C1-3C5 Figures 3A and 3B are screen prints of AmazonAuction.Com, illustrating the two sites’ identical formats to Ebay.Com. This universal Internet Auction Format is used with very minor variations on the theme in all state-of-the-art auction sites. Basically, the home pages of the auction sites contain a primary category listing, a “featured” listing, a “search” entry box, and some informational/promotional icons, textual descriptions, and links. Clicking on a category title on the primary category list brings the next page containing the listing of the next level of categories under that particular category, and a list of the “featured” items in that category. Clicking on one “featured” title brings information about that one particular “featured” item. Similarly, clicking on brief descriptions of promotional or informational entries and icons

brings more detailed information about the entry. Clicking on a subcategory brings the listing of the next level subcategories and the “featured” items in that subcategory, until the particular category path is exhausted. Then, all items under that end category is listed over many web pages, accessible one web-page at a time, each containing more than one physical print page. Links to information of Items listed on a web page are accessible also one-item-at a time. Entering a search word or a search phrase brings a list of items that contain the word or phrase in the tagging header or in the description.

Although facilitated to provide simultaneous auctions, Internet format of the known-art does not allow viewing, monitoring, or tracking of simultaneous auctions of multiple items. As described previously, a buyer can elect to visit the “bidding” screen, enter a bid for each interested item, and request to have electronic-mail (email) sent to his/her email account as a one-time notification when a bid is outbid. Or the buyer can periodically log-on to the auction site, and manually search and browse for status information of interested items, one at a time.

Please replace page 9 line 2 to page 12 line 20 of the specification with the following:

~~FIGS. 1A-1B~~ FIG. 1A: Ebay.Com. Known-Art Auction Format Only ONE link (one item)-can be clicked at any time on any page, as in all Internet web pages. FIG. 1A also shows the home page, with its 1st level categories listed on the left side of the page, the “featured” items listed in the middle of the page, and the “search” box at top center of the page.

~~FIG. 1A shows the home page, with its 1st level categories listed on the left side of the page, the “featured” items listed in the middle of the page, and the “search” box at top center of the page.~~

~~FIG. 1B shows the next level categories under Antiques Category listed on the home page. The “featured” items are listed on the right side of the page.~~

~~FIGS. 1C1 to 1C9 is sent from the site server when the “Furniture” subcategory is elicked on Figure 1B.~~

~~FIGS. 1C1 to 1C6~~ FIGS. 1B1 and 1B2 are one-line descriptions of “featured” items in the Furniture category.

~~FIGS. 1C7 to 1C9 are~~ FIG. 1B3 is the first of the 37 web-pages listings of 1,761 furniture items currently being auctioned on the site.

~~FIGS. 1C1 to 1C3~~ ~~1D1 through 1D3~~ are detailed description and bidding status of ~~[[the]]~~ item 122, Super Turn of Century Oak Victorian Secretary, listed on FIG. 1B2. ~~Figure 1C2, 6th item from the top: Super Turn of Century Oak Victorian Secretary.~~

~~FIG. 1E1 is the “Search” result for “bedroom furniture” in the Antiques category. There are only two items found.~~

~~FIG. 1E2 is the “Search” result for the same phrase “bedroom furniture in all categories, with 17 items found, including many Dollhouse bedroom sets.~~

~~FIGS. 2A 2E, 2F1 2F2, 2G1 2G2: Auction.Yahoo.Com.~~ Known Art Auction Format.

~~FIG. 2A is the home page with the 1st level category listing listings where, for example, “Antiques & Collectibles” is one of the several 1st level category listings displayed.~~

~~FIG. 2B lists subcategories under “Antiques & Collectables.” The page is sent from the site server when the “Antiques & Collectables” category on the home page 2A is clicked.~~

~~FIG. 2C lists subcategories under the “Furniture” category on Figure 2B. The page is sent from the site server when the “Furniture” category on Figure 2B is clicked.~~

~~FIG. 2D~~ FIG. 2B lists the 5 featured items on the top of the page, and a total of 16 items in the “Living Room Set” category. The page is sent from the site server, when the

~~“Living Room Set” category on Figure 2C category in “Furniture” category under “Antiques & Collectibles” category is clicked. The hierarchy of the category levels is displayed above the 5 featured items on the page.~~

~~FIG. 2E shows the “Armoires” subcategory under the “Furniture” category listed on Figure 2C. There are a total of 12 items. The 5 “featured” items are shown on the top of the page.~~

~~FIGS. 2F1 and 2F2 show the “Chests” subcategory under the “Furniture” Category listed on Figure 2C.~~

~~FIGS. 2G1 and 2G2 show the description of an item listed on 2F1, the Oriental Hope Chest. Only one item can be clicked and reviewed at a time.~~

~~FIGS. 3A, 3B1-3B3 AND 3C1-3C5: The Auctions.Amazon.Com. Known Art Auction Format.~~

~~FIG. 3A is the home page, listing the 1st level categories on the left side, and 6 “featured” items in the middle of the page.~~

~~FIGS. FIG. 3B 3B1 through 3B3 lists the second level categories under the “Antiques” category, and the “Featured Auctions” in the “Antiques” category.~~

~~FIGS. 3C1 to 3C5 lists the first 50 items out of a total of 464 items in the “Books & Manuscripts” category under the “Antiques” category. Information can only be gotten one item, one link at a time, as in all Internet sites.~~

~~FIGS. 4A-4D: An example of an On-Line Auction presentation implemented with the current invention.~~

~~FIG. 4A shows the [[The]]” featured”, and “search,” or “category” browsing results are shown in a graphical array, with multiple-select capabilities. The “upcoming” auctions are announced in a cycling or stationary (scrolled to view) margin-strip at the right side. The “present” auctions are presented in rows.~~

~~Each row of the array can advance to left, back to right, continually move (GO button) to show more items, or stop, at command by clicking on the command buttons at the left margin of the row. The “upcoming” column on the right has similar functions. The movement for the column is up-down movement.~~

~~In this particular presentation example, we have chosen 3 categories and the “featured.” The same method and apparatus can present items of the same category, or the subcategories within a category, for example, separating sports cars of different manufacturer.~~

FIG. 4B shows the ~~[[The]]~~ screen shot of the Auction home-page screen at some time later. Due to exercising the moving functions, some items have changed positions on the array, some items have left the screen, and some items not shown in 4A appear on the screen.

FIG. 4C shows the ~~[[The]]~~ selected items from 4A and 4B appear on a monitoring screen. The screen is automatically tracked/updated by synchronizing with the server data at user programmable intervals. Object that should be seen from all sides has an “On” button in a portion of its still image. Clicking the “ON” button turns on the Virtual Reality with automated rotation as well as mouse driven rotation features. The “ON” button can be replaced by “VR” or any other form that representing turning on “Virtual Reality.” Detailed information for each monitored object can be called individually by clicking on the “Detail” button, or selectively and collectively by clicking the “select” boxes, and submitting requests to the server after completing the selection process. The object positioning in the array can be sorted with various criteria at user request or default setting. The “alert” can also be programmed, for example, to surround “End Time” box with small blinking stars, or any other attention causing signal, to signal the end of “open” auction within 30 minutes (or an hour), and blinking red stars for “My bid” button when “my bid” is out bid.

FIG. 4D shows selection of ~~Selecting~~ objects monitored in screen Figure 4C for viewing detailed information and access bidding apparatus collectively, would bring this screen after submitting the selection. In this example, The Egli Ucelli landscape painting, the Jaguar S-series, and the Algarve rug axe selected.

FIG. 5 shows an example of the “Live” Auction Format of the Present Invention.